

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully traverses the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of claims 2 and 6-12 over Yoshida (JP 2000219049), and the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claim 3 over Yoshida in view of Cook (U.S. 3,559,708).

As recited, e.g., in claim 2, a vehicle fuel tank supporting structure supports a plurality of parallel adjacent fuel tanks. The fuel tank support structure includes, among other things, a first fuel tank support supporting a first fuel tank of the plurality of parallel fuel tanks, the first fuel tank having a first axial center a first height above a floor of the vehicle; a second fuel tank support supporting a second fuel tank of the plurality of parallel fuel tanks, the second fuel tank having a second axial center a second height above the floor of the vehicle, the second height being lower than the first height, the second fuel tank support including a weakened portion; and a longitudinal movement stopping device, stopping a longitudinal movement by the first fuel tank, and redirecting the longitudinal movement of the first fuel tank to apply a downward biasing force to the second fuel tank, thereby moving the second fuel tank in a downward direction toward the vehicle floor. The weakened portion of the second fuel tank support breaks when the downward biasing force applied to the second fuel tank is equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

In contrast, although one of the plural fuel tanks of Yoshida appears to have an axial center higher than that of an adjacent fuel tank, Yoshida includes no disclosure or suggestion of corresponding structure or corresponding structural interaction to that recited in the claims, e.g., first and second fuel tank supports, supporting respective first and second fuel tanks, and a longitudinal movement stopping device, stopping longitudinal movement by the first fuel tank, and redirecting the longitudinal movement

to apply a downward biasing force to the second fuel tank, and a weakened portion which breaks when the downward biasing force is equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

Cook discloses an impact-resistant container, but does not disclose or suggest the claimed fuel tank supporting structure, including, e.g., first and second fuel tank supports supporting respective first and second fuel tanks at different heights, and a longitudinal movement stopping device, redirecting longitudinal movement of one fuel tank into downward biasing force applied to the other fuel tank, which breaks a weakened portion in its respective fuel tank support when a downward biasing force is equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

For at least these reasons, Yoshida does not anticipate claims 2-6 or 6-12, and Yoshida combined with Cook does not create a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claim 3. Claims 7-11 are allowable at least because of their dependence from claim 2, and new claims 13-15 round out the coverage to which Applicant is entitled.

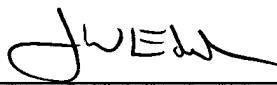
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of claims 2-12.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 6, 2009

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